

## TITLE OF THE INVENTION

Golf Club Protective Guard

## CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

5        This application claims the priority of U. S. Provisional Patent No. 60-464,894 issued on April 21, 2003.

## STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not applicable

## 10                      REFERENCE TO A "SEQUENCE LISTING"

Not applicable

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

15        [0001]   The present invention relates generally to protecting the heads of golf clubs from damage, and more specifically to the protection of a golf club head while in personal use (the act of hitting the ball).

### DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

20        [0002]   Golf club head covers to protect the club while being transported in the bag have been in use for years. More recently golf shops have been attaching three pieces of tape to the top, bottom and face of a golf club for temporary protection of their inventory while on trial or demo.

25        [0003]   The main problem with both club protection products is they do not address the need to protect the appearance and subsequently the lifetime value of the golf club during personal use, when the majority of the damage normally occurs to the club.

[0004]   As stated above, conventional head covers are primarily intended to protect the clubs during transportation, and do not protect the club from damage that can occur as a result of a miss-hit while in the act of hitting the ball.

30        [0005]   The problem with the protective tape product for trial or "demo" is that it is designed to protect the golf shop's inventory by wrapping nearly the entire head of the club. This gives the potential buyer a chance to try out the club without leaving any trace of use, and allows the reseller to sell the club to another buyer as new. As a result the tape is not intended for prolonged use.

35        The other problem is that the tape is not tailored to fit the club closely. This

fact, coupled with the type of tape used, make the use of this protection product very noticeable and alters the look of the club, which does not lend itself to personal use.

5 [0006] While these devices may be suitable for the particular purpose that they address, they are not as suitable for protection of a golf club during personal use.

[0007] In these respects, the protective guard according to the present invention substantially departs from the conventional concepts and designs of the prior art, and in so doing provides an apparatus primarily developed for  
10 the purpose of protecting of the appearance and the lifetime value of a golf club while in personal use.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] How a golf club looks at address or at set up has always been  
15 important to golfers psychologically. Looking down on a golf club with noticeable sky marks or abrasions can be a constant reminder of shots that went bad and can have a negative effect. This fact, coupled with recent developments in the golf market, has led to the publishing of a "Blue Book" for used clubs. Much like in the automotive industry, the value of a club is  
20 primarily based on the type of club and its physical appearance. This has resulted in greater demand and a higher value for used clubs for trade or resale, and were all factors that led to the development of the Golf Club Protective Guard.

[0009] In view of the foregoing disadvantages inherent in the known types  
25 of golf club protective devises now present in the prior art, the present invention provides a new protective product that protects the lifetime value of a golf club while in personal use.

[0011] The general purpose of the invention, which will be described subsequently in greater detail, is to provide a new golf club protection product  
30 that has many of the advantages of the protection products mentioned above, and many novel features that result in a new golf club protection product that is not anticipated, rendered obvious, suggested, or even implied by any prior art, either alone or in any combination thereof.

[0011] To attain this purpose, the invention consists of a transparent  
35 abrasion resistant adhesive vinyl strip that preferably has a thickness in the

range of 4 to 5 mil and acts as a deflective guard that is designed to fit the contours of the club and when attached provides a semi-permanent, almost invisible protective barrier against abrasions caused by miss-hits during the act of hitting the ball.

5   **[0012]**   There has thus been outlined, rather broadly, the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter.

10   **[0013]**   In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and to the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and  
15   carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for the purpose of the description and should not be regarded as limiting.

**[0014]**   A primary object of the present invention is to provide a protective guard that will overcome the shortcomings of the prior art devices.

20   **[0015]**   An object of the present invention is to provide a protective guard to protect the appearance and subsequently the lifetime value of the club.

**[0016]**   Another object is to provide a protective guard that is virtually invisible while protecting the Golf Club.

**[0017]**   Another object is to provide a protective guard that is semi  
25   permanent, but can be removed from the club at any time or replaced with little or no adhesive residue.

**[0012]**   Another object is to provide a protective guard that is economical and can be removed and replaced easily.

**[0013]**   Another object is to provide a protective guard that is attachable to  
30   various sizes, styles and type of golf clubs.

**[0020]**   Another object is to provide a protective guard that does not interfere with the normal operation of the club.

**[0015]**   Another object is to provide a protective guard that is lightweight and does not affect the overall balance and performance of the club.

**[0022]** Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become obvious to the reader and it is intended that these objects and advantages are within the scope of the present invention.

**[0023]** To the accomplishment of the above and related objects, this  
5 invention may be embodied in the form illustrated in the accompanying drawings, attention being called to the fact, however, that the drawings are illustrative only, and that changes may be made in the specific construction illustrated.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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**[0024]** Various other objects, features and attendant advantages of the present invention will become fully appreciated as the same becomes better understood when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters designate the same or similar parts  
15 throughout the several views, and wherein:

**[0025]** Fig. 1 is a perspective of a golf club head with the protective guard invention attached, and shows the components of both the protective guard and the golf club.

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**[0026]** Fig. 2 is a diagram showing all of the components of a preferred embodiment of the protective guard that constitutes the invention.

**[0027]** Fig. 3 is a perspective of a golf club with the protective guard of Fig. 1 being fitted to the club.

**[0028]** Fig. 4 is a perspective of a golf club with the protective guard of Fig. 1 being lined up and attached to top edge of the club.

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**[0029]** Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a golf club with the protective guard of Fig. 1 being attached to the face of the club.

**[0030]** Fig. 6 perspective view with the protective guard of Fig. 1 installed.

**[0031]** Fig. 7 is a perspective view of a similar golf club, illustrating the type of damage that the protective guard of Fig. 1 protects against.

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#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

**[0032]** Turning now to the drawings, in which similar reference characters denote similar elements throughout the several views, the attached figures illustrate the golf club protective guard, which consists of a transparent strip  
35 that is designed to fit the contours of a golf club, and that when properly

attached, that strip provides an almost invisible protective barrier against abrasions caused by miss-hits.

**[0033]** Figure 1 is a perspective view of the head of a golf club 10 with protective guard 11 attached. This view permits pointing out the common features of a golf club, and illustrates how guard 11 looks when attached to the head of the golf club 10. The head of a golf club 10 is shown generally to include a top 12 and a face 13, and the contoured edge along which top 12 and face 13 are disposed in a mutually facing relationship is referred to as top line 14. The outward point at which top 12, face 13 and top line 14 meet is the toe 15, and the opposite end where shaft 16 attaches to the head of the club 10 is the hosel 17. The point where the hosel 17 meets the top of the club 12 is the base of the hosel 18.

**[0034]** With respect to Fig. 2, the preferred embodiment selected to illustrate my invention includes a transparent 4 to 5 mil vinyl adhesive strip that provides an abrasion resistant and deflective guard 11, and is shaped to fit the head of a golf club 10. Guard 11 has a cut away 19 (also shown in Fig. 1) that is designed to fit around the base of the hosel 18 of club head 10. The bottom edge of guard 11 has V-shaped notches 20 as shown in Fig. 2 that are designed to compensate for material gathering and potential lifting that can be created by wrapping guard 11 along the contoured top line 14. Another feature is that guard 11 is designed to accommodate clubs of all sizes, as demonstrated by dashed lines 21 in Fig. 2 that represent alternative sizes. Before installation of guard 11, the adhesive side 22 of guard 11, as shown in Fig. 4, is attached to glossy backing paper 23 shown in Fig. 5 that is split into equal halves 24 as shown in Fig. 2.

**[0035]** Figures 3 - 5 illustrate the procedure for attaching guard 11 to a golf club head 10. Before installing guard 11, it may be necessary to measure and then cut guard 11 to the correct size for each particular club, as shown in Fig. 3. The first step of the installation procedure is to place guard 11 onto top line 14, while retaining backing paper 23 in place. The second step is to place the cutaway end 19 of the guard 11 at the base of hosel 18 and measure the length of guard 11. The third step is to mark a line approximately 0.5 cm (3/16 in.) short of toe 15, which will be the new cut line 25 shown in Fig. 3. The fourth step is to use extra guards 11 as a template, place the extra guard

11 up against the new cut line 25, and trace around the rounded end of guard 11 to create an appropriately sized guard 21. The final step is then to take a pair of scissors and cut along the inside of newly sized guard 21 to form a properly sized guard 11.

5 **[0036]** Figure 4 now shows a method by which to line up the guard 11 on club head 10. The first step is to peel back the half of the backing paper 23 from the guard 11 that has the cutaway 19 that fits around hosel 17, so as to expose adhesive side 22. The second step is to place guard 11 at the base of hosel 18 and lay the adhesive side of tape 22 along top line 14 between face  
10 13 and top 12 of the club 12. The V-shaped notches 20 provide a good guide and should align with the top of face 13. To ensure that guard 11 is lined up, one should only let adhesive side 22 of guard 11 stick to the edge of top line 14. This will allow easy realignment of guard 11 if not straight in a first attempt.

15 **[0037]** As can be seen in Fig. 5, once guard 11 is lined up the next step is to attach guard 11 to top 12 of the club. One may use a thumb and work slowly from the center of guard 11 to the base of hosel 18, pressing firmly to work all air bubbles out as adhesive side 23 of the guard 11 is affixed to top 12 of the club. The next step is to remove the remaining backing 23 and repeat the last  
20 step: working from the center on guard 11 to toe 15 of the club, and again attaching adhesive side 22 of guard 11 only to top 12 of club head 10. The final step is to use the same technique as was used on the top 12 of club head 10, and work from top line 14 to the lower edge and press guard 11 to face 13 of club head 10.

25 **[0038]** Figure 6 is a perspective view of a club head 10 with guard 11 installed, showing the transparent quality of guard 11 and demonstrating the difficulty of seeing guard 11.

**[0039]** Figure 7 demonstrates the kind of damage 26 that can occur along top line 14 and top 12 of club head 10 without having used the present  
30 invention (guard 11). The club shown is of the same type as shown in Fig. 6. Both clubs are approximately the same age and have experienced similar usage.

**[0040]** With respect to the foregoing description, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include

variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

**[0041]** Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not intended here to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, with the scope of the invention to be determined only by the claims appended hereto.